

TOWN OF WINDBER
Berwind-White Coal Mining Company
Windber
Somerset County
Pennsylvania

HAER No. PA-322

HAER
PA
56-WIND,
8-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

TOWN OF WINDBER
Berwind-White Coal Mining Company

HAER No. PA-322

HAER
PA
56-WIND,
8-

Location: Along PA 56, Windber, Somerset County, Pennsylvania

Date of Construction: 1911-1921

Present Owner: Various private owners.

Present Use: Residences and commercial establishments.

Significance: The Town of Windber was constructed as the regional headquarters of the Berwind-White Coal Mining Company. The company, conscious of its image as a forward-looking modern corporation, sought to create a model mining community. Windber featured broad, tree-lined streets, a central park with a bandstand, detached houses for workers and a variety of privately owned commercial shops. Workers were housed in outlying parts of the town as well as in the satellite mining settlements, close to the coal mines.

Historian: Margaret M. Mulrooney, 1989.

Project Information:
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Windber is distinct among southwestern Pennsylvania's coal company towns because it consisted of a large, independent town center surrounded by eleven dependent mining settlements. Built as its regional headquarters, the Berwind-White Coal Mining Company wanted Windber to present a positive corporate image, and so it set out to create a model mining community. For this reason, the town featured broad, tree-lined streets, a central park with a bandstand, detached houses for workers and a variety of privately owned specialty shops. Berwind-White actively encouraged outsiders to establish new businesses with the result that Windber had a far more varied economic base than most coal towns. The company also instigated a program through which employees could buy houses instead of rent. But these special considerations did not extend beyond the town's boundaries.

Scattered throughout the countryside around Windber, the satellite communities had their own stores, houses and mines but nevertheless depended upon Windber for their survival. Despite the company's claim to provide everything "that makes for the comfort and convenience" of its employees, living and working conditions in town, and especially in the satellites, were similar to coal towns elsewhere in the region. In addition, Berwind-White repeatedly slashed wages, practiced favoritism and blacklisting, utilized company police, and evicted union sympathizers. As the following chapter will show, Windber, like Pullman, Illinois, proved that environment alone was not sufficient to overcome the inherent deficiencies of the company-town system.

The Company

The Berwind family's involvement in the coal trade began in 1861 when the eldest son, 15-year-old Charles, went to work for Robert H. Powell, a Philadelphia coal merchant. Berwind continued working for Powell after the Powellton Coal and Iron Company was formed in 1863 and became its vice president by age 21.¹ When the Powellton Company disbanded, Berwind formed a new partnership with John Bradley; but by 1874, Berwind and Bradley, too, had dissolved. Undaunted, Berwind became associated with a retired judge, Allison White, previously of the coal firm White and Lingle. The resulting partnership included Charles' younger brother, Edward, and was known as Berwind, White and Company.²

Operating primarily in central Pennsylvania, the Philadelphia-based firm opened its first mine, Eureka No. 1, in Houtzdale, Clearfield County, in 1874. Over the next decade it was followed rapidly by Eureka Nos. 2 and 3; the Goss Run mine; Atlantic Nos. 1 and 2; Eureka 4, 5 and 6; Cataract 1; and the

Karthus mine, all in Clearfield County. Producing well over 3,000 tons a day, Berwind, White and Company was soon recognized as one of the largest coal firms in the state--and renowned for their "celebrated Eureka bituminous coals." In order to manage their expanding empire more efficiently, the partners incorporated as the Berwind-White Coal Mining Company in 1886 with Charles F. Berwind, president; Edward J. Berwind, vice president; Fred McOwen, secretary; and Allison White, treasurer. Within a few months, Allison White passed away and was succeeded by another brother, Harry A. Berwind.³

Continuing to operate as Berwind-White, the firm bought up extensive lands in Clearfield and Centre counties. They opened the Ocean, Pacific, and West Eureka mines, as well as Eureka Nos. 7 through 29.⁴ As a result of Edward's superb salesmanship, most of the coal produced was sold to ocean-going steamships. Among those served by Berwind-White were the Inman, North German Lloyd, Cunard, Hamburg and French lines, giving the company a virtual monopoly of the transatlantic steamship coal market. To supply all of their customers, the Berwinds maintained a fleet of sixty barges and more than 3,000 coal cars.⁵ By 1890, the growing demand for Berwind coal necessitated immediate expansion. The company thus began to focus its attention on the nearby coalfields of Somerset county.

Despite the vast mineral resources available, Somerset County was still predominantly rural. It had a small population, little capital, and an underdeveloped transportation system.⁶ Large-scale coal development required a company like Berwind-White, which had enough money to finance the construction of rail lines, open mines, and recruit labor. Thus, in 1893, when Berwind-White began acquiring property, it set in motion the forces that would eventually transform Somerset County into one of the most productive coal regions in Pennsylvania.

By 1897, Berwind-White owned all of the land around present-day Windber, including the mineral and surface rights of the Wilmore Coal Company, a small local firm. Berwind-White then reorganized Wilmore Coal into a land-holding subsidiary in charge of administering the company's 6,500 acres in northern Somerset County. In September, Eureka No. 30 was opened into the Lower Kittanning seam (also known as the Miller or B seam). Twelve other mines, Eureka Nos. 31 through 42, soon followed.⁷ The Scalp Level Railroad was extended south from Berwind's Yellow Run shaft in Dunlo, Cambria County, to serve these mines. By the turn of the century, the Windber mines alone produced more than 3 million tons of coal per year.⁸

With the advent of World War I, Berwind-White continued to expand its operations by opening new mines in Westmoreland and Cambria counties, and in West Virginia and Kentucky. Subsidiaries such as the Ocean Coal Company, Herminie Land Company, New River Consolidated Coal Company, Ocean Supply Company and Eureka Supply Company were established to manage operations in each new area. Meanwhile, the firm maintained its corporate headquarters in Philadelphia; sales offices in New York, Baltimore and Boston; shipping piers all along the East Coast; and bunkering depots in the Caribbean. As its overseas shipping needs grew, the company acquired the Berwindmoor, the Berwindvale, the Berwindlea and the Berwindglen.⁹ After the war ended, Berwind-White used these ships to advance its European export trade. By the 1920s, most of the American coal imported by France and Italy bore the Berwind stamp.

In the 1930s, Berwind-White began a period of transition that was to last for several decades. The Depression, the beginning decline of the coal industry, and the election of Charles Dunlap, Edward J. Berwind's nephew, to the company presidency, collectively forced the company to explore new directions. World War II generated a sudden resurgence of the coal industry, but the wartime boom years ended quickly. Faced with increasing competition from cheaper fuels, a substantial reorganization of the company's interests occurred in the 1950s that included shutting down most of the Pennsylvania and West Virginia mines. Capital that had previously been used to maintain these mines was then redirected into non-coal-related pursuits such as industrial products, real estate, health care, pharmaceuticals and natural resources. In 1962, the Berwind-White Coal Mining Company was again reorganized into the Berwind Corporation, with C. Graham Berwind, Harry A. Berwind's grandson, as its president. Any remaining mining activity ceased at this time, although Berwind retained its extensive mineral and surface rights. Today, the "celebrated Eureka bituminous coals" are leased and extracted by small operators but account for only a minor percentage of the present company's income.

Planning and Development

In the mid-nineteenth century, most of the surface land around present-day Windber comprised a farm belonging to David Shaffer. Rich in resources, Shaffer's property extended from Paint Creek across rolling hills to the Cambria County line. On the farm, Shaffer operated a small sawmill, a coal mine and a forge.¹⁰ The site was ideal for large-scale industrial development and in 1893, Berwind-White's superintendent, James S. Cunningham, approached Shaffer with an offer to buy the farm.

Over the next few years Cunningham acquired thousands of acres of land in northern Somerset County, including Shaffer's property. By 1897, the first local mine, Eureka No. 30, was open, and plans for Windber well underway. From the beginning, Windber was conceived as a model mining community. As Leifur Magnusson discovered, one of the reasons companies build towns is to "advertise the company and keep it favorable before the public."¹¹ The Berwind-White Company, which participated in Magnusson's survey, clearly agreed: Windber would not only serve as a base for all of the company's western mining operations, but it would become an industrial center worthy of outside attention. Although the Berwinds controlled other mining communities in the bituminous coalfields, Windber was to be a regional headquarters and as such, considerably larger and better planned.

Although James Cunningham is considered the "Father of Windber," it was his assistant, Heber Denman, who laid out the town. The year 1897 was fraught with activity as streets were surveyed, water and sewer lines laid, lots platted and company houses built.¹² By 1900, the company-owned newspaper boasted:

No city of the west, boomed by mines of silver or gold, can compare in any respect with the vigorous town nestling among the hills of Somerset. Here the coal drift and cornfield are side by side and orchard and forest, grove and farmhouse bound the horizon of vision.¹³

At the same time, Somerset, the county seat, was still a quiet little community. The Berwinds easily envisioned Windber surpassing it in size and importance, but realized that such development required extra capital. Therefore, they actively encouraged outside investors to come to Windber and establish new ventures. Almost overnight, David Shaffer's farm was transformed into a noisy, busy boomtown. By the turn of the century, it certainly appeared as if Windber were well on the way to becoming the "metropolis of Somerset County."¹⁴

Initial development took place in the valley northeast of Paint Creek. Although situated at the bottom of a slight hill, the valley bottom was flat enough to utilize a grid plan. The engineers laid out six major streets named Cambria, Somerset, Graham, Washington, Jackson, Jefferson, and Lincoln avenues. These were crossed by numbered streets. Paint Creek flowed between 17th and 19th streets, dividing the grid plan into two uneven sections. Graham and Somerset avenues connect the two sections, but curve slightly after crossing Paint Creek because of a hill to the south. The company-owned railroad winds its way

through town, too, running between Jackson and Jefferson, then splitting above Graham Avenue to reach Eureka Nos. 35 and 36 to the north and Eureka Nos. 33 and 34 to the south.

Graham Avenue is the main thoroughfare. Early construction took place primarily between 9th and 15th streets. By 1899, these few blocks comprised the central business district. Some of Windber's most architecturally prominent structures are situated within these few blocks, including the Arcadia Theater and Palace Hotel.

Gradually, other private businesses appeared on Graham Avenue, such as the Windber Brewing Company and the Windber Lumber Company. There were groceries, jewelers, hotels and tinsmiths. But as one headed out of town in either direction, the character of the street changed from commercial to residential. Even today, houses line Graham Avenue from Paint Borough to 8th Street, and then from 23rd Street to Rummel. There are also four churches and two schools along Graham.

Berwind set aside a prime lot on Graham Avenue for a central park. It was bounded by Graham, 15th Street and the railroad tracks and contained a bandstand for outdoor recitals. As development downtown proceeded, the park lands assumed greater commercial value. Thus, in 1913, Berwind financed the construction of a large, two-story edifice on the corner of Graham Avenue and 15th Street. The upper floor was designed to house the offices of the Wilmore Coal Company, Berwind-White's subsidiary land-holding company. The first floor was reserved for the post office. Next to it, on the north, sat a small, wood-frame passenger station. Because of the increasing number of arrivals and departures in Windber, a new passenger station was built in 1916. This large, rectangular, brick building was erected in the middle of the park along the south side of the railroad tracks. A smaller trolley station was built along Graham at the corner of 15th Street at the same time. The Midway, a group of stores and hotels, was constructed across the tracks from the passenger station. By World War I, the park was one of the busiest places in town, crisscrossed by trains and pedestrian traffic. It was also about 50 percent smaller than originally designed.

In 1897, Berwind-White officials instructed the engineering staff to reserve all of the lots along 15th Street between Graham and Cambria avenues for its own use. By 1899, insurance maps reveal that the two clubhouses, Eureka store, post office, passenger station and Wilmore House Hotel--all financed by the coal company--occupied the lots surrounding the David Shaffer house at 15th Street and Somerset Avenue. By 1904, the fire station, Leister House Hotel, Clement Building and various brick stores

lined the southern corner of 15th and Graham with the first Windber Electric Light Company and an ice plant behind them. While these buildings were under construction by private individuals, Berwind-White moved the Shaffer house a few yards north and built its new office, a two-story, stone building, in its place.

Within twenty years, the company also replaced the frame post office on the opposite corner with a new, two-story, brick building. The new post office (1913) and trolley station (1917) were open by World War I, and the Eureka Department Store had doubled in size. The last office building built by the company was the Electric Building, constructed in 1925 on the site of the Wilmore House.

In conjunction with this group of commercial structures along Graham Avenue and the impressive collection of private residences on Somerset Avenue, the buildings along 15th Street form the heart of downtown Windber.

The Satellites

Berwind-White opened more mines in the hills around Windber throughout the 1910s. These new mines, Eureka Nos. 33 through 42, were all outside the official borough boundaries, while the earlier Eureka Nos. 30, 31 and 32 were on the periphery (Fig. 4-1). Although not entirely isolated, the new mines were still far enough away from the town center to require their own houses and stores. These smaller mining communities can be compared to the satellite textile-mill villages that rose around Lowell and Manchester in the early-nineteenth century: they functioned independently from each other, and had their own housing, schools and stores, but remained dependent on the town center. Unlike the textile satellites, however, all of the Eureka mines were controlled by the same parent company.

Despite strong ties to Windber, each satellite mining community maintained a separate identity. In fact, Berwind-White employees living at the mine sites referred to their community by the mine number; residents of houses near Eureka No. 40, therefore, lived not in Windber or Scalp Level, but at "40." These communities have never been incorporated as individual towns. They are still known by their mine numbers although, ironically, many of the present inhabitants cannot locate the original mine sites. Eureka Nos. 30, 35, 36, 37, 40 and 42 are the only surviving satellite communities.¹⁵

Unlike Windber, the satellites reflect little conscious planning effort. Instead, they resemble more typical mine patches, where the mine site received primary consideration and housing, second. The placement of the houses, tipples, railroad tracks and mine buildings all reflected the natural terrain. Such was the case at Nos. 35 and 36.

The communities for Nos. 35 and 36 sit on the hill above 17th Street. To reach them, one drives out Railroad Street (an offshoot of 17th Street), up a fairly steep incline to where the road levels off. At the western end are the remains of the No. 35 mine site, including the ruins of Berwind-White's first central power plant. To the east, moving slightly uphill, are the old company store for No. 35 on the south side of the road, and the dispensary on the north. Next, are three semi-detached frame houses. Built for the No. 35 bosses, they were located close to the mine in case of an emergency. Beyond these are the company houses. There were forty-seven semi-detached houses for No. 35 and thirty-nine for No. 36. Arranged in a linear pattern on both sides of the street, the communities could best be described as a wide place in the road. Because of the steep hills above and below the road, this was the only possible plan. The two groups of housing are separated by a brick public school. The No. 36 mine site was at the far east end.

Natural topography also determined the placement of the eighty-eight semi-detached houses at mine No. 37, located two-and-a-half miles northwest of town. All of the houses were arranged in linear patterns. One group of houses was built on both sides of Scalp Level Pike. Like Railroad Street, the Pike runs along a ledge cut into the hillside. Just below it, Berwind-White cut another road into the hillside; a second group of company houses was built along this road on the north side. There were two more groups of housing farther down the hill near the mine site. The mine foreman's house and the company store were strategically placed in the center of the entire community.

Of all the mine satellites, only No. 40 had a grid plan. Located just two miles north of Windber off Old Scalp Hill, it was one of the longest operating and most productive of the Berwind mines. As elsewhere, the mine site occupied the flattest area with its 110 semi-detached houses on the hill above. The grid consists of four numbered streets crossed by two named streets. By placing the grid at an angle to the hillside, the engineers minimized the street grade while ensuring proper drainage of the site.

Railroad Street is the most direct way to reach the No. 42 settlement. Situated three-and-a-half miles northeast of Windber in Cambria County, the fifty-one houses at No. 42 were built in a typical linear plan. There are three streets at No. 42 but they are neither parallel nor perpendicular; rather, they form a rough

triangle around the abandoned mine site. The company store, stable and slaughterhouse were located inside the southern tip of the triangle where Railroad Street enters the community. The dispensary and mine office were located immediately north. Most of the houses at No. 42 were built along Clyde Street, which extends to the northwest away from the company store. Clyde Street was bent slightly to conform to a branch of Paint Creek. There are eleven other houses to the north of the mine site. The westernmost house belonged to the mine foreman and was set apart from its neighbors.¹⁶

Regardless of the company's planning efforts, Windber was still a coal town. As such, certain conditions persisted despite physical arrangement. By the advent of World War I, thirteen mines were operating in close proximity to town, each with its own "boney" pile of waste nearby. Composed of extremely flammable coal wastes, the piles ignited, emitting hydrogen sulfide and a smell likened to rotten eggs.¹⁷ Trains loaded with lump coal rumbled through the communities, shrill whistles signalled the beginning and end of each shift, and smoke from the huge steam generators hung in the air. Since houses had to be near the mine, unpleasant surroundings were unavoidable. Importantly, these problems characterized all coal towns, even those that were "model communities" like Windber. Knowing this, it is probable that the Berwinds never intended to correct all of the inherent problems of coal company towns, but instead sought only to make conditions as agreeable as possible under the circumstances.

Workers' Housing

Housing in town was clearly segregated. Miners lived in small, crowded houses on the fringes of town, while management personnel and prominent businessmen lived in somewhat more pretentious homes on the Hill, an area northeast of Graham Avenue that Berwind reserved for such occupants. Unlike workers' houses, most of these were large dwellings with spacious yards and shady trees. Quite a few were even referred to as mansions.

The houses Berwind-White built for its mining employees varied somewhat in plan and elevation, but all were simple, two story, wood structures. In Windber, most of the miners' homes were detached dwellings; in the satellites they were semi-detached. Most had horizontal weatherboard siding and shingle roofs although some had board-and-batten siding with composition paper roofs. Whether in town or in the satellite communities, the houses sat near the front of extremely deep lots. None had indoor plumbing, but by 1915, all had electric light.

Furthermore, Berwind-White painted all of its company houses white with black trim. This strengthened the image of uniformity even when houses did vary slightly.

It is said that Berwind-White allowed some employees to participate in designing their own houses as part of their model company town plan. In this way, the company could proudly boast that instead of building "houses for workers," they were promoting "homes for participants in the Great Enterprise."¹⁸ While this concept had great appeal on paper, it never actually became the guiding principle the company professed it to be. For one thing, it is apparent that Berwind-White limited alterations to the basic house plans. After all, the cost efficiency of company houses relied upon their relative homogeneity. Indeed, most of the houses in town are the same size (five rooms), and differ from each other only in their orientation to the street (Compare the floor plans in Figs. 2 & 3). Some have gable fronts, some have gable ends; there is no logical alteration of the two plans, which seems to indicate that the orientation was left up to the occupant. So, while some employees were probably consulted regarding the design of their company houses, the overwhelming similarity of the houses indicates that their input was severely restricted. And although it was theoretically possible for individuals to buy company-built houses, few persons could actually afford to do so. Thus, although the company considered its employees "participants," their participation was very limited.

Windber

Construction in town proceeded rapidly after the first mines opened. A few houses were dismantled at the company's Houtzdale, Pennsylvania, mine and reassembled in Windber, including the first two houses on the north side of 17th Street above Somerset Avenue.¹⁹ Just east of these are an early group of company-built houses along Cambria and Somerset streets, between Paint Creek and 20th Street (Fig. 4). By 1899, there were forty-one dwellings at the site.²⁰ All were detached, two-story, balloon-frame houses with three bays, weatherboard siding and shingle roofs. Each measured approximately 20' x 30'. The houses had small setbacks from the street but individual lots were large, about 45' x 155', forming a fairly spacious backyard with room for gardens and outbuildings. Narrow alleys ran between the yards, creating a firebreak and permitting access to the interior of the block. Tenants of these houses probably worked at Eureka No. 32.

Another large group of company houses was located between Jefferson Street and Big Paint Creek near Mine 31. Houses lined both sides of 9th and 10th streets, and the southwest side of 11th. In 1899, there were sixty-six dwellings in those six blocks. All were two-and-a-half-story, detached, two- or three-bay balloon-frame structures, depending on their orientation to the street (Figs. 5 & 6). The original construction drawings for these houses show the same structure in two positions; gable-end or gable-front. Both had standard weatherboard siding and shingle roofs. Approximately eight had rear ells, but only five had porches of any kind. Lots were arranged as before, between 50'-wide streets and 20'-wide alleys. An iron bridge led across Paint Creek to Mine 31.

There were three wood-frame tenements called the "Hungarian Quarters" just across the bridge. Similar tenements were also built at Eureka Nos. 32, 33, 34, 36, 37 and 38.²¹ Unlike the houses, they used vertical plank construction (Fig. 7). Walls consisted of an inner layer of boards nailed to the face of the sill at the ground level, and to joist bearers at the second story and attic levels. The joist ends were then notched to fit over the joist bearer; nails hammered through the inner boards into the joist ends provided additional support. A layer of tar paper was applied over the inner layer, and 16' boards and battens were nailed over that to form the outer skin. Interior partition walls used 2" x 4" studs nailed in place over two layers of floorboards, then all interior walls and ceilings were lathed and plastered. Each tenement measured 28' x 72' and had six four-room units. Three tenements still stand near No. 36.

The next major development of company houses in Windber occurred sometime between 1899 and 1904. Houses were constructed on the southeast side of 6th Street, and both sides of 7th, 8th and 9th streets between Graham and Jefferson. Unlike the two previous developments, these houses were not uniform. Although all were two-story, balloon-frame structures, some were semi-detached, some had rear ells and some had porches. They also vary in their orientation to the street. Maps of Windber show all of the houses on 9th Street to be detached and considerably larger than the others.

At the same time, additional dwellings were built on the southeast side of 21st Street and both sides of 22nd Street between Cambria and Graham avenues. Most were detached, except for six duplexes on 22nd Street. Many of these new houses were identical to those on 9th Street, but had six to eight rooms instead of four. All were two-and-a-half story, frame, with the same siding and shingled roofs.

The Stockholm Avenue houses were also constructed by 1904. Facing the railroad tracks between 18th and 21st streets, Stockholm Avenue probably got its name from the Swedish immigrants who lived there. Locally it was known as "Swede Street." Houses followed the same pattern seen elsewhere in town: detached, three-bay, two-and-a-half story, wood-frame structures with four or five rooms.

The Satellites

The first company houses built in the Windber area were located near Mine No. 30. These twenty semi-detached houses were built near the western boundary of Paint Borough. They were simple, four-bay, balloon-frame structures with stone foundations, end chimneys, and weatherboard siding. Each unit had six rooms: parlor, dining room and kitchen downstairs, and three bedrooms above. There was also a cellar and an attic. Both units together measured 32' x 24' with a 24' x 14' rear ell (Figs. 8, 9 & 10). Each structure cost \$800 to build and rented for \$9 a month, the maximum rent for a company house in 1911.²²

One of the most intact areas of company housing around Windber is Railroad Street. Built in 1900 to house employees at Mine No. 35, this community had forty-seven semi-detached houses (or ninety-six units). The original construction drawing reveals that all were plank construction on stone foundations. The 18'-long vertical boards are nailed directly to the outer face of the sill. The first floor joists measure 2" x 10" and are notched to fit over the sills and girders. At the second floor level, 2" x 8" joists are notched to fit over a 2" x 6" joist bearer nailed to the boards. The ends of the attic floor joists are butted against the boards as well. A 1" x 6" false plate is nailed across the joist ends and the top edge of the board layer. The rafters, which measure 2" x 6", are notched to fit the false plate. Inside, machine-cut lath and a rough coat of plaster were applied to the walls and ceiling. Floorboards were laid, then partition wall studs nailed into place; these walls were likewise lathed and plastered. Eight-inch baseboards finished each room.

Like the houses built in 1897 at Mine No. 30, each unit had six rooms: a parlor, dining room and kitchen on the ground floor and three bedrooms above, plus cellar and attic. At the foundations, each double house measured 30' x 24' with a 14' x 24' rear ell housing both kitchens. When built, there were side porches only. The front door was reached via wooden steps; front porches have been added since. All had center chimney flues, four bays and four-light windows.

By using the 1911 U.S. Immigration Commission Report, the 1910 census schedule and photographs (dated 1913), it is possible to obtain a fairly accurate picture of life at Mine No.35 in the 1910s. These sources unanimously indicate overcrowding and poor sanitation as the overriding characteristics. Seventy-three households were enumerated in the census of which fifty-five had boarders in addition to the nuclear family. Boarders helped offset the \$9 per month rent. The number of boarders ranged from one to eleven; four appeared to be average. Units No. 593 and No. 595 are considered representative: No. 593 listed a husband, wife, three children and three boarders, all Slovakian; No. 595 housed a husband, wife, two children and seven boarders, all Polish.

As to living conditions, the Immigration Commission Report found that coal and wood were burned as fuel and oil lamps used for light.²³ Coal stoves provided the only heat. Privies were built of vertical planks in groups of four at the back of each double house. Water was hauled from hydrants located between every two houses. A system of open gutters and pipes conveyed waste water, refuse and excrement. Each household also maintained a garden in the backyard, which was fenced with stakes and chicken wire. Those on the south side of Railroad Street backed up to a switch line for empty coal cars. Often, areas within individual yards were fenced to contain chickens, pigs or cows.²⁴ Because of such factors, there was little natural vegetation in the settlement.

A notation on the original construction drawing for the houses built at No. 35 indicates that the design was used liberally at other Berwind-White mine sites. Thirty were built at No. 37 in 1900, 100 at No. 38 in 1901, 100 at No. 40 in 1905-1906, and ten at No. 42 in 1909-1910.²⁵ Although all of the houses at No. 40 survive, their building specifications call for studded walls instead of planks. The forty-seven semi-detached houses at No. 35 are the only known vertical-plank houses left in Windber.

The houses at No. 36 are almost identical to those at No. 35, having been built from the same plan, but have studded walls and weatherboard siding. To the far west end of Railroad Street are three six-unit, plank-frame tenements like the ones built at No. 31 in 1897. Sources indicate that they were occupied by itinerant bachelor miners, but at present they are occupied by families.²⁶

Berwind-White opened No. 37 in 1899 and began building houses the following year. There were eighty-eight double houses, two six-unit tenements and one hotel to accommodate the employees and their families. These units rented for \$7 per month in 1911. Of

the thirty board-and-batten-sided houses built in 1900, only twenty-six remained in 1924. These have since been demolished. The surviving houses have four rooms per unit.²⁷

The Mine No. 40 settlement was established in ca. 1905. Originally there were 110 double houses. One hundred of these were built according to the design used at No. 35, but instead of vertical planks, walls were constructed of 2" x 4" studs with weatherboards outside and lath and plaster inside. Because No. 40 is closer to town than No. 37, units there rented for \$9 per month compared to the average rent at Berwind-White mine sites of \$6-\$7 per month.²⁸

Although Mine No. 42 opened in 1907, the community did not exist until after 1910.²⁹ According to one resident, the twenty-one six-room houses located near the store were built first. The nineteen four-room houses down the street were built around 1916 (Fig. 4-15). All appear to have studded walls; interviews with residents indicate that the studs are not continuous from sill to plate, but resemble platform framing. Research was unable to substantiate this, but if so, they are the only known platform-frame company houses around Windber.³⁰

Just up the hill is another section of housing and the No. 42 school. The foreman occupied the largest house, a detached, frame structure just east of the school. The next two houses are semi-detached and were intended to house the mine bosses. There are ten semi-detached houses on this upper street; they are probably the ten built in 1909-10 as noted on drawing E-1/114. All of the houses at No. 42 rented for \$9 per month by the 1920s including free electricity. Outdoor pumps provided running water, but since it was sulphurous, residents obtained springwater, too.³¹

Employees were never compelled to rent company houses. In fact, Berwind-White encouraged people to buy their houses. Prices were reasonable and payable in low monthly installments. In 1911, for example, a five-room house cost \$500, or \$12 a month. A six-room house cost \$700 or \$15 a month. Payments were usually deducted from the bimonthly paychecks. Despite the relatively low costs, most Berwind employees did not purchase their houses. In the first place, houses were for sale only within town limits; all houses in the satellite communities were company-owned. Like other companies, Berwind-White probably retained ownership of property in the mine communities because of their more temporary nature. Also, many miners were transient; some went to other companies, and some returned to Europe. Furthermore, renting was less expensive as all utilities and maintenance were free.³²

Management Housing

Berwind-White's upper-management personnel occupied a wide variety of dwellings. Most were located on the Hill, an exclusive, seven block residential area north of Graham Avenue, and intermingled with the houses of Windber's doctors, lawyers, businessmen and other professionals. The highest-ranking company officials, like the superintendent of mines and the general manager, lived in imposing houses along 15th Street above Somerset Avenue. Locally, they were referred to as "mansions." Such dwellings were occupied by only a few individuals, but were nevertheless built and owned by the company.

Berwind-White reserved large lots near the main office building for its senior officials. The Queen Anne style mansion built for Assistant Superintendent John Lochrie is located just northeast of the office on the north side of 15th Street. Built ca. 1905, its notable features include a three-story, semi-hexagonal tower, multi-colored window panes, a large enclosed porch, and ornate cornice moldings. The Queen Anne style house across the street was constructed ca. 1905 for the superintendent of the Scalp Level District, James Cunningham. Unlike its neighbors, which face 15th Street, this structure faces a driveway it shared with the Berwind Clubhouse to the southeast. The main facade has a hexagonal tower, bay windows and a three-sided wrap porch.

Lochrie and Cunningham reported to General Superintendent Thomas Fisher, considered second in rank only to the Berwind brothers themselves. Fisher spent most of his time in the Philadelphia office where he oversaw all of Berwind-White's mining operations in the United States. Because the Scalp Level District was so important, he maintained a house in Windber. Built ca. 1908, his Colonial Revival dwelling was surrounded by a six-and-a-half-acre tract located just north of Cunningham's property. Even farther north is the last residence built for a Berwind official in Windber, the Edward J. Newbaker House. Constructed for the vice president of the Berwind-Wilmore Division in 1921, it reflects the Dutch Colonial style that was popular in the 1920s.

As company-built houses, all managers' homes were designed by Berwind-White engineers and constructed by the Windber Lumber Company, a Berwind subsidiary. Although not trained as architects, the engineers did have access to books of plates and plans of houses by architects. These designs were then altered to suit the taste and needs of each official. Colonial Houses for Modern Homes: For People Who Wish their dwellings to be Distinctive, Tasteful and Characteristic, written by New York

architect E. S. Child in 1913, is one source they consulted.³³ In this manner, the company provided stylish homes befitting the status of its senior employees.

At the western end of the Eureka No. 35 settlement are three more semi-detached houses. Although basically the same size as the miners' dwellings, they are of slightly better quality since they were intended for the mine bosses. These three have weatherboard siding and front porches with turned posts and decorative brackets. Window and door surrounds also received a greater amount of architectural treatment. Inside, the kitchen walls were wainscoted. Each was provided with an enamel sink and hot water. But the biggest luxury was upstairs: a full bathroom with sink, toilet, tub and hot and cold running water; its walls were also wainscoted. The house directly opposite the store was occupied by the No. 35 mine foreman.³⁴ The fact that these houses were semi-detached, yet reflect greater attention to detail and comfort than miners' houses, would support their occupancy by lower management. Identical houses were built for the foremen at No. 37 and No. 42. The foreman's house at No. 40 is a three-bay, two-story, wood-frame structure like the houses in Windber. It has a large front porch with ornate, machine-cut brackets and posts.

Commercial Buildings

One of the Berwind-White Coal Mining Company's most lucrative subsidiaries was the Eureka Supply Company, Ltd., which administered all company-owned stores. Upon commencement of employment with Berwind-White, each employee was required to sign an agreement permitting the company to make paycheck deductions. Dealing with the company stores was not mandatory, but since "a good customer of the stores is less likely to be discharged should occasion arise than one who deals at other places," miners were pressured to do so.³⁵ In the satellite mining communities, the company store was the only store available. Miners had to buy goods there or walk to the nearest town. Prices were substantially higher at the Eureka stores, but the quality of merchandise was generally superior to that of competitors.

Known for their motto, "Dealers in Everything," the stores offered a vast array of items including furniture, clothing, groceries, tools and dry goods. The first Eureka store opened its doors ca. 1894 at Herminie, Pennsylvania, the mine community named for Edward J. Berwind's wife. Locally, the first branch store opened in 1897 to serve the mine community at No. 30. By 1916, a branch operated near every mine. In all, there were thirty-eight Eureka stores.³⁶ In Windber alone, there were six:

one at 10th and Jefferson streets for No. 31; at 21st and Graham for No. 32; the main store on 15th Street between Graham and Somerset; and one branch each at Nos. 35, 37, 40 and 42.

Most of the small Eureka stores around Windber had a standard design: red brick, two-story pilastered walls, corbelled brickwork, and stone foundations. The main facade was divided by a pent roof extending across the entire front above the first-floor display windows and center door. Five double-hung windows above the pent roof admitted light to the second floor. At attic level there was a small, square window set in the gable or in the center of a low dormer.

Each store also had an associated slaughter-house. Several of these stores are still standing: No. 35 on Railroad Street in Windber is a tire dealership; No. 42 is vacant but retains its slaughterhouse and stable; 10th Street is vacant; No. 30 is a residence; and No. 37 has been substantially altered by its present occupants. The 21st Street store also survives, but its architectural treatment is different from the others.

Built between 1910 and 1916, the 21st Street store served the mostly Italian population around mine No. 32. The building is two stories with pilastered walls like the others, but its buff-colored brick with red and green accents resemble the Palace Hotel facade. The facade is also distinctive, with a door to each side, windows in the middle and a balcony. Reached by stairs on both sides, the balcony has a railing made from curved pieces of iron. A small canopy shelters it from the elements. Presently, the building houses a pizza parlor on the first floor and apartments on the second.

The main Eureka store on 15th Street is also unique. Its original structure was built by 1899: red brick, three floors, a basement, a railroad platform, and a warehouse to the rear. A store manager's residence sat at the back of the property behind the warehouse. Its front had a large triangular pediment with a sunburst motif and bore the words "Eureka Department Store." Tall display windows covered the first and second floors, with somewhat smaller windows across the third.³⁷

Immediately north of the store was a combination bank and post office, constructed by 1904. This structure was brick with a hipped roof and Palladian style dormer windows. By 1916, the Eureka Department store had expanded into this building and a cross-gabled addition to the rear, becoming Windber's largest commercial structure. Soon after, all of the additions were refinished with an English-Tudor-style layer of stucco and wood. The interior featured a pressed-tin ceiling, a cashier's cage and

Windber's first elevator. Cash boxes were conveyed from each department to the cashier's cage in the rear by an electrically operated system of wires and pulleys.³⁸ The main store remained open well after the smaller ones were closed. In 1969 it was sold to a group of investors. The business operated as the Eureka Store until 1982 when its last owners declared bankruptcy. Several smaller firms occupied the store until 1983, when most of the building was closed. A hardware store and drug store continue to occupy one corner of it today.

Although all Berwind employees were expected to shop at the Eureka stores, the company welcomed other businesses to Windber. Some, like the Eureka stores, sold general merchandise; others provided goods or services that Eureka stores could not. Most congregated along Graham Avenue between 11th and 15th streets. By 1899, these three blocks were already the established commercial center of town. According to insurance maps, there were four grocers, four general stores, a barber, two pool halls, a cobbler, blacksmith, jeweler, two hardware stores, a butcher, two clothiers, a large planing mill, a livery and a Chinese laundry, all operating in this small area. All were frame structures and varied from two to three stories in height. Upper floors were reserved for storage and apartments. Long boardwalks ran the length of each block, protecting pedestrians from having to walk in the wide streets.³⁹

A few other stores operated beyond Graham. Many were run by immigrants and served their small ethnic enclaves by offering highly specialized goods in a comfortable atmosphere. But with the opening of each company-owned store, competition increased so that few stayed in business for long. For example, the 1904 insurance maps of Windber show that five houses on 10th Street below Graham were operating as groceries; by 1910, a Eureka store was open on 10th Street and the small stores were gone. Eureka stores remained the dominant commercial force in Windber from 1897 to the 1970s.

Institutional Buildings

Churches were among the first structures built in the new community of Windber. By 1917 there were thirteen, representing most denominations and ethnic groups. There were three Brethren churches, three Catholic, and one each Hungarian Reformed, Greek Catholic, Methodist Episcopal, Swedish Lutheran, United Evangelical, and United Presbyterian. Hebrew and Episcopal services were held in town, as well.

St. John Cantius is considered the oldest organized parish, dating from 1897. Drawn from the growing populace, St. John's original congregation was comprised mostly of Irish Catholics. Soon, the parish included Catholics of all nationalities. As the number of Catholic immigrants increased, each ethnic group formed its own church. St. John's eventually became associated with Windber's Polish community. The present church was begun in 1912 and dedicated in October 1914.⁴⁰ Designed in the Gothic style, its front facade has two square towers culminating in twin spires with golden crosses at the apexes. From a distance, these spires are still visible above the trees.

Under the name St. Stephen's, St. Mary's Byzantine Catholic Church was established by immigrants from the northeastern section of Austro-Hungary. By 1900, plans were made to build a church on three lots purchased from Berwind-White for \$250. In 1901 a new frame church stood on the corner of 8th and Somerset streets with a brick dwelling for the pastor beside it. Designed by Johnstown architect George Wild, the church was built by the Windber Planing Mill Company on Graham Avenue. In 1914, the church was moved across the street and encased in brick. It is still standing. The congregation continued to grow and contracted another Johnstown architect, Walter Myton, to draw up plans for a larger structure. The present church was completed down the street in 1927 by the Windber Lumber Company. According to a state inventory, the new building is Romanesque Revival; locally, it is referred to as Byzantine.⁴¹

The First Presbyterian Church at 11th and Somerset streets had its first meeting in March 1899, but did not have a church until the next year. Their new church, a simple wood-frame building, was dedicated on May 21, 1900 and served the congregation until the present church was built in 1929. There are several other prominent parishes in Windber that date to the turn of the century. These include: SS. Cyril and Methodius Catholic (1905); St. Anthony of Padua Catholic (1905); St. Mary's Hungarian Greek Catholic (1912); and First Methodist (1901). Holy Child of Jesus (1921) and SS. Peter and Paul Orthodox Greek Catholic Church (1936) have large ethnic congregations as well.⁴²

The local churches played an important role in the Windber community. Most of the congregations were made up of first- and second-generation immigrants. In orthodox churches like St. Mary's, SS. Cyril and Methodius, and SS. Peter and Paul, immigrants heard services in Greek, Hungarian or Russian from priests of the same ethnic background. By the same token, the Italians at St. Anthony's and the Irish at Holy Name of Jesus heard Mass in the language of their church: Latin. In addition to language, the new parishes observed traditional Feast Days,

Holy Days and marriage, christening, and funeral rites. The parishes built their own schools and formed mutual beneficial societies. Many of the ethnic social clubs were sponsored by churches, as well.⁴³ Forced to learn a new language and accustom themselves to new surroundings and customs, the immigrants' churches existed as a constant link to their native lands. Built by and for immigrants, these churches reflect a vital part of Windber's rich cultural heritage.

Speaking of Berwind-White in 1911, the Immigration Commission stated that "practically no welfare work is undertaken by the company." Instead, they maintained "an air of indifference." Like many of their contemporaries, the Berwind brothers leaned away from strict paternalism. Nevertheless, the company did finance a community hospital in 1905, and for which they deducted a mandatory health fee of 50 cents per month from each employee's paycheck. Of the more than \$191,000 paid to employees in earnings in 1908, less than 1 percent was deducted by the company for hospital fees. Fifty cents was thus quite reasonable for the unlimited medical treatment received, but it reflects the popular attitude that social services were provided only as part of an overall business policy.⁴⁴

The original 1904 hospital structure had a central, two-story concrete block with two wings housing the men's and women's wards. The architect is unknown, but the Windber Lumber Company, a Berwind-White subsidiary, carried out the actual construction. Noted Philadelphia architect Horace Trumbauer designed and built several major additions in 1930. Further additions, made in the 1970s, have almost completely obscured the original hospital building.⁴⁵

Technically, the hospital was administered by the Windber Hospital Association, but since many of its board members were high-ranking Berwind officials, the company ultimately maintained control. From the beginning, the hospital was a success. By 1917, the U. S. Surgeon General called it second to none in Pennsylvania "barring the hospitals in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia."⁴⁶ The Berwinds continued to make donations to the hospital over the years.

One adjunct program funded by the Berwind family was the Windber Hospital School of Nursing, chartered on May 23, 1916.⁴⁷ The nurses lived on the third floor of the hospital until a separate building was built in 1923. Named Herminie Hall for Edward Berwind's wife, the Colonial Revival structure housed schoolrooms and a dormitory. The last class graduated in 1961 and the school was closed. The former nursing school now houses some of the hospital's administrative offices.

In 1970, the Berwind Corporation donated the Windber hospital to the Conemaugh Valley Memorial Hospital so that the two institutions could be run jointly. Windber residents preferred the personal attention they had received under Berwind control and formed the non-profit Windber Hospital and Wheeling Clinic in 1973. At the present time, the clinic remains a vital part of the community and still receives financial support from the Berwind Corporation.

Ethnicity

When the Berwind-White Company began mining in 1897, it actively recruited experienced labor from other mining communities. The largest number of new employees at that date--approximately 1,500 men--were brought from Great Britain. By 1899-1900, production needs demanded an even greater work force. Coinciding with the large-scale European migrations at the turn of the century, Berwind-White started to recruit eastern and southern European laborers as well. It sent some representatives directly to Europe to procure coal workers; others waited in large East Coast cities and put immigrants on trains destined for Berwind coalfields. Ads were placed in ethnic newspapers like New York City's Magyar Munsklap. In Hungarian, immigrants read the offers of high wages, good working conditions, inexpensive housing and steady employment. Stating that "a thousand Hungarians are waiting for you," Berwind-White enticed many new arrivals to Windber. By 1911, when the Immigration Commission conducted an in-depth investigation of Windber, 75 percent of the total population (approximately 7,500 people) were "foreigners."⁴⁸

Almost all immigrants entered the mines as unskilled laborers. The actual cutting and hauling of coal was mechanized, so that many simply became loaders and shoveled coal onto conveyors for a living. Down in the mine tunnels all nationalities worked side by side; Berwind-White feared that a preponderance of one race in a work gang would decrease output and foster "clannishness and discontent." This integration applied to housing, too, but apparently only in the mine satellites, as Windber had several clearly defined ethnic neighborhoods. Italians, for example, congregated around 21st and 22nd streets, Swedes on Stockholm Avenue, and the Irish near 10th Street. Magyars, Slovaks and Poles predominated, living throughout the intervening neighborhoods and satellite communities.⁴⁹

Immigrants were consistently maligned throughout the United States, and attitudes in Southwestern Pennsylvania were no different. In 1908, the newspaper Progressive Pennsylvania reported that the state had been invaded by "hordes of Italians,

Slavonians and other immigrants of distinctly lower types than the original European settlers of Pennsylvania." The paper claimed that immigrants had little sense of civic pride, "for what do they know about the past of Pennsylvania, or about its present achievements? Most do not even speak the English language. They are not Pennsylvanians in any sense."⁵⁰ If foreign-born miners were not considered Pennsylvanians, then certainly they were not Americans, either. As such, they existed in a socio-political vacuum.

Recreation

Many early Windberites belonged to social clubs and lodges. Some of the first organizations were formed in conjunction with local churches, but the majority were founded by immigrants as support groups. Such clubs seem to fall into one of two categories: beneficial unions or educational unions. Both were very much in need in the early twentieth century. Berwind-White, like most coal companies of the period, provided no education or training before employment, nor benefits after employment ended. Therefore, groups like the Slovak Educational Club were formed to help new arrivals assimilate into Windber society, while others, such as the Hungarian Reformed Beneficiary Club, saw to it that widows and injured miners received financial support. Some of Windber's earliest organizations include: Polish Falcons (1907); Loyal Order of Moose (1910); Italian Literary, Musical and Beneficial Society (1912); Abruzzi Lodge (1913); Sons of Italy (1919); Slovak Workingmen's Beneficial Society (1914); American Russian Educational Society (1925); and the American Polish Educational Association (by 1920).

Windber also supported several bands and orchestras. There was a Slovak Band (1904), an Italian Band (1903) and a Hungarian Band (1913) that held concerts and sponsored dances along with the Fire Company Band (1903) and the Windber High School Band (ca. 1910). Fred Waring's Orchestra (1915) played to Windber audiences, too. There were also an Opera House and three theaters on Graham Avenue. The Windber Theater Corporation, organized by Thomas Fisher, John Lochrie and M. McNeal in 1919, sponsored events as well. Berwind-White constructed Recreation Hall behind the fire house in 1910 for dances, meetings and indoor sports.

For outdoor sports, the company maintained Dewey Field on Stockholm Avenue at 17th Street. Berwind promoted athletics from a very early date and helped organize basketball and track teams

in 1901, and a baseball team in 1902. In addition, each mine supported its own teams. Foot races, horse races and boxing matches were equally popular.

Transportation

In the early nineteenth century, before Windber was settled, sole access to the region was the Scalp Level and Johnstown Turnpike, a toll road with a gate near what is now mine No. 40. A heavily travelled thoroughfare, the turnpike was covered with a layer of cinders, rock, and later, coal wastes.⁵¹ Today, it is known as Old Scalp Hill. Additional roads extended south through Rummel and New Ashtola to Bedford, and north to Elton, Salix, Portage and Cresson. The real catalyst for development came with the extension of Berwind-White's shortline railroad from Cambria County to Windber in 1897.

First used to transport coal and timber, the Scalp Level, as it was called, added passenger service by 1898. An electric trolley for passenger service was established in 1902. Both were used to transport miners to distant mine sites like Nos. 36, 37 and 42. Leased from the Johnstown Traction Company in Moxham, trolley service began daily at 5:30 AM and ended at 11:30 PM. Trolleys and trains remained the primary source of transportation until the advent of the automobile in the 1920s and 1930s caused their use to decline. Passenger service to Windber by train was discontinued in 1933 while a tremendous flood in 1936 wiped out most of the trolley system. Thereafter, buses and cars were substituted.⁵²

Depots and warehouses were built along the tracks between Graham and Somerset below 15th Street. Two of these structures are extant. A small wood-frame passenger depot originally stood along the tracks near 15th Street, but when the Wilmore Coal Company office was built in 1913, the depot had to be rebuilt. The present building was erected by 1916.⁵³ It is a much larger, brick structure, with a low, hipped roof and wide, projecting eaves supported by paired white brackets. For many years, this depot served as a point of entry into the "metropolis of Somerset County." Now it is occupied by the Windber Public Library.

Facing Graham Avenue, the trolley depot is almost identical to the train station in treatment, but is much smaller in size. Built during the same period, it too has brick walls and a low, hipped roof supported by paired wooden brackets. Two dormers pierce the tile roof on the street side. The original doors on Graham Avenue have been made into windows, but little else has

been altered on the exterior. Historically, the building housed a barber shop in the north end, and a waiting room in the south end. Currently, it houses an insurance office.

Other Industries

Berwind-White was the largest employer in the Windber area, but several other local firms were important enough to deserve attention--the most notable being lumber companies. The coal industry demanded large amounts of timber for mine props, railroad tracks and tipples, plus a great number of houses, offices and other buildings. Fortunately, Windber was surrounded by acres of rich forestland. Lumber soon became a major industry in its own right.

Four important firms were based in town. McNeal Lumber, established in 1891, was the earliest. It owned several sawmills around northern Somerset County and a large lumberyard in town. In 1897, it was joined by the Windber Planing Mill Company. Situated on a lot at the corner of 12th and Graham, this firm supplied and built the houses at mine No. 30, the Wilmore Club House, and many offices, hotels, churches and stores around Windber.⁵⁴ W. T. Geddes also operated a large mill and yard. Previously, Geddes had been a top Berwind employee. When he organized the lumber company in 1900, Berwind-White became his biggest customer. The yards occupied a full acre on Graham Avenue and employed more than 300 men. In 1901, Geddes Lumber merged with the Windber Lumber Company, a Berwind subsidiary, and formed the Pennsylvania Lumber and Construction Company. Geddes continued to serve as its president.

Berwind-White was the dominant coal company in Somerset County but it was by no means the only coal concern. Windber itself had other independent coal producers like the Rummel and Reitz coal companies. Both were created by John Lochrie, a former Berwind employee. Lochrie leased his coal from Berwind so that, although technically independent firms, neither ever became much of a rival; Berwind-White eventually acquired ownership of both. Rietz Coal Co. still functions as a Berwind subsidiary and controls most of the local mineral rights still owned by the corporation. Other coal operators included: the B Quality Coal Company; Heckler Coal Company; Gahagen Coal Company; Heshbon Coal Company; and Marsh Coal Company.⁵⁵

In addition to coal, the mines around Windber also contained thick veins of clay. The W. P. Kelley Brick Company was manufacturing bricks by 1900 to capitalize on the abundance of materials, labor and demand. By 1903, they produced more than

30,000 bricks daily. As the only local producers of high quality bricks, they remained open well into the twentieth century. The Windber community also supported the Windber Brewing Company, the Asbestine Manufacturing Company, the Vulcan Mine Car Company, and the Steam and Air Specialty Company, Ltd., reflecting a far more varied economic base than most coal-company towns.⁵⁶

Labor Relations

Herbert Gutman has described the archetypical American industrial leader as an American by birth, of a New England father, Protestant, distinctly upper class in origin, and "born and bred in an atmosphere in which business and a relatively high social standing were intimately associated with his family life." Scholars have pointed out that the four Berwind brothers--Charles, Edward, John and Harry--characterized, in a sense, the classic American industrialist.⁵⁷

All were well-educated, conservative and ambitious. Never really poor, they quickly became one of the wealthiest families in the United States. Edward, who became president of the coal company after Charles died in 1890, was known to associate socially with the likes of Henry Clay Frick, Andrew Carnegie, Henry Ford and J. Pierpont Morgan. Yet, unlike these men, the Berwinds remained extremely independent and highly individualistic in their business ventures. Although Berwind-White was one of the leading coal producers, the brothers never affiliated themselves with any other companies. Operating mostly from offices in New York and Philadelphia, they were absentee owners who visited the coalfields only rarely. They were strongly autocratic, and maintained their tight control over employees through a small but loyal group of managers. Resentful and suspicious of outside interference, the Berwinds were also fiercely anti-union and utilized company police and their considerable political influence to defeat all union agitators.⁵⁸ Despite such aggressive tactics, Berwind-White miners struck against company policies on several occasions, but the biggest confrontation, by far, came in 1922.

During World War I, coal companies throughout the United States overextended themselves to meet the increased demand for fuel. Faced with a rapidly diminishing market after 1918, American coal operators sought to maintain profits by reducing wages. Previously, for example, Berwind miners earned \$1.18 per ton for coal and 60 cents per square yard for "dead work," the layers of clay and limestone between the coal seams. On February 15, 1922, Berwind-White abolished dead work payment altogether and reduced wages to \$1.01 per ton.⁵⁹ Bituminous miners were outraged as coal

companies across the country implemented similar reductions. Union members attempted to negotiate a new wage agreement, but owners remained adamant. In response, a convention of 2,200 UMWA delegates voted for a nationwide strike if an agreement were not reached by April 1, 1922.⁶⁰

District 2 of the UMWA, which included Cambria County, received the news with apprehension; all of the miners in neighboring Somerset County, working at some of the most productive mines in Pennsylvania, were still non-union. Knowing that the success of the strike relied on mass participation, District 2 President John Brophy, of Nanty-Glo, printed 20,000 copies of the call to strike and had twelve men distribute them to Somerset miners.⁶¹

Locally, the strike began at the Maryland No. 1 Shaft in St. Michael, Cambria County, and spread quickly to other area mines. Secret meetings were held on farms around Windber. On April 4, a committee of six Windber miners met with union organizers at St. Michael and declared that Windber would strike if union representatives were sent immediately. When T. D. Stiles, editor of the Penn Central News, and George Cowan, a union organizer from Portage, arrived in town two days later, they found more than 2,500 Berwind miners waiting to sign up. Within a week, all of the Windber mines were idle.⁶²

The Berwind-White Company retaliated at once, and on April 10 began issuing eviction notices and collecting on company store accounts. In all, 750 families were evicted, including the young, old, sick and infirm. Some moved in with families or friends, but most set up temporary housekeeping in tents donated by the UMWA. Armed guards patrolled the town and each satellite community. Any person caught trespassing on company property was immediately arrested. Strikers were detained for questioning, harassed and threatened. Groups of three or more were disbanded by the company police, but the men stayed on strike.⁶³ Conditions worsened as the strike continued. John Brophy reflected that:

One would find it hard to prove that Somerset County was under the jurisdiction of the United States Constitution during 1922. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania was no more interested than the federal government in the rights and welfare of the coal diggers. State policemen and militia were as eager as county and private police to do the bidding of the operators.⁶⁴

Money from the dues of thousands of new members, including Berwind miners in Pennsylvania and West Virginia, went to miners' relief funds. Nevertheless, many men were forced back to work

for financial reasons. Finally, President Warren G. Harding called a conference of operators and union representatives to Cleveland on August 15, 1922. John L. Lewis, president of the UMWA, readied the new agreement, but it applied only to miners who were union members before the strike began. Thus, the Berwind miners, along with several thousand others who had joined the union after April 1, 1922, found themselves abandoned by the national union. Along with miners throughout the bituminous fields, Berwind employees remained on strike for another year.

As the months passed, the Berwind brothers became increasingly unable to fulfill their contracts. One of their largest customers was the Interborough Transit Company of New York City, of which Edward Berwind was a director.⁶⁵ Because of the coal shortage, the transit system temporarily shut down. Then, a contingent of Windber miners marched on Berwind-White's New York headquarters. In response to the situation, New York Mayor John F. Harlan sent a special committee to investigate living and working conditions in the Berwind-White Company's coalfields. Arriving in Johnstown in October 1922, the Committee found that more than 200 families had been evicted and some 70,000 District 2 miners remained on strike. Informed of the committee's arrival, Berwind officials removed all armed guards from the area, yet a few company men were retained to monitor the committee's movements. The committee members traveled to all of the mine sites, went into the mines, talked to strikers and held public meetings. From September to November the committee's findings appeared in articles in the New York Times and created a minor public scandal. The formal report to the mayor, published in October, compared the miners to serfs and told of barefoot women and children. But never at any time during the investigation did the Berwind brothers or any ranking members of their staff issue a statement to the press. Unable to reach an agreement with the unresponsive operators, a delegation of miners met in Johnstown and called off the strike on August 14, 1923, seventeen months after it had begun. Unionization of Somerset miners, and Berwind men in particular, was postponed until 1933 and the passage of the National Industrial Recovery Act.⁶⁵

Past to Present

At the turn of the century, hopes were high that Windber would continue to grow and develop along with the coal industry. It was estimated that enough coal remained beneath the surface to last well into the 1970s, or at least until manufacturing could replace mining as a way of life. Unfortunately, by the end of World War II, it was clear that neither of these predictions would come true and the "Great Enterprise" was at an end.

Berwind-White began selling property in the Windber area in 1950 with the sale of seventy houses at mine No. 30. By 1962 all mining had ceased and most of the developed property in Windber and its satellites had reverted to private ownership. Some smaller businesses remained open, but without Berwind-White, population and the local economy declined sharply. Unlike most coal towns, Windber was slowly able to make the transformation from coal company town to incorporated municipality in spite of these setbacks. In fact, the Windber Borough government now occupies the company's old main office while a division of the present Berwind Corporation maintains a small operation in the former Windber Electric building. Although the coal industry is gone, and Windber's economic and social future unclear, the area's rich mineral resources, proximity to an urban center, and potential for new growth makes it possible to conclude, as author Frank Alcamo did, that "there will always be a Windber ready to be part of tomorrow's history."

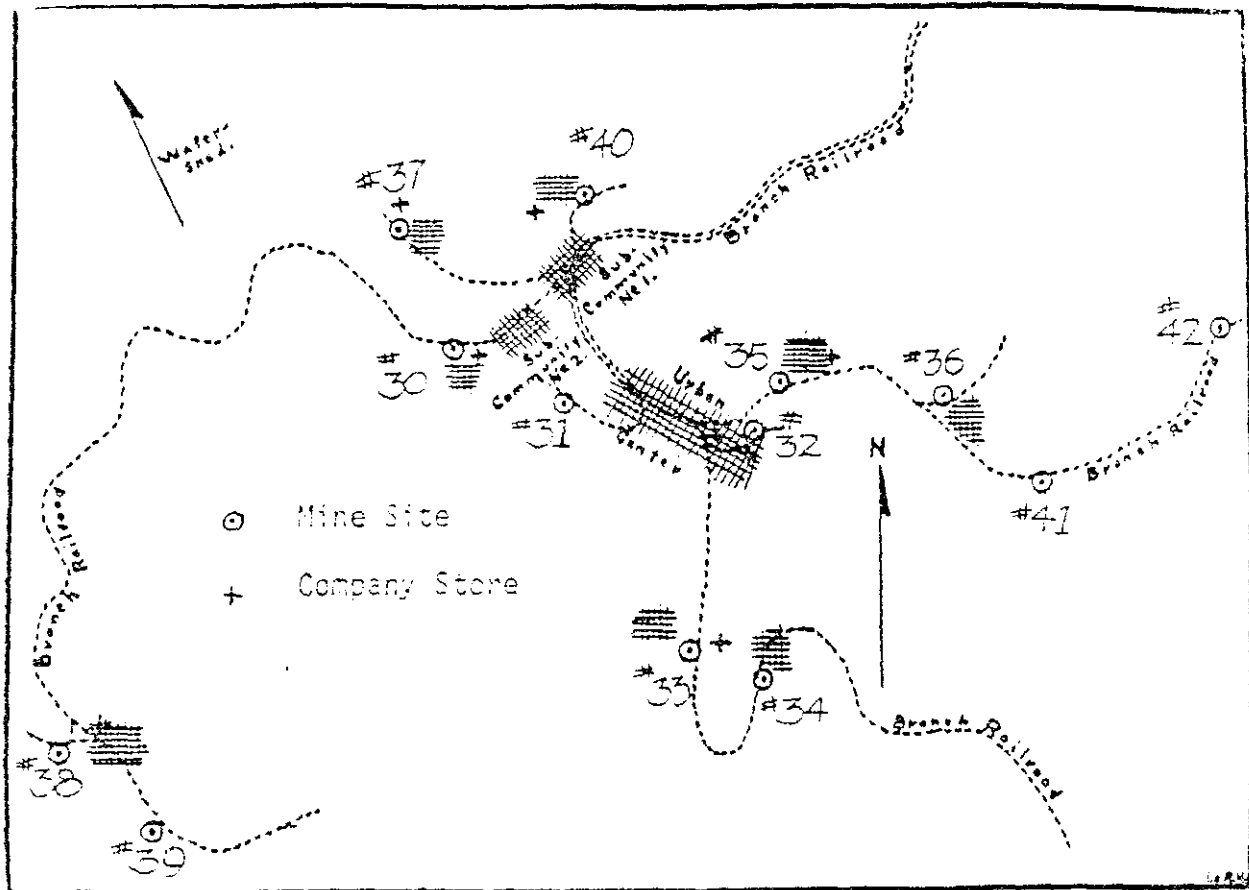


Figure 1. Map of Windber and its satellite mining communities.
 From U.S. Immigration Commission Report (1911).

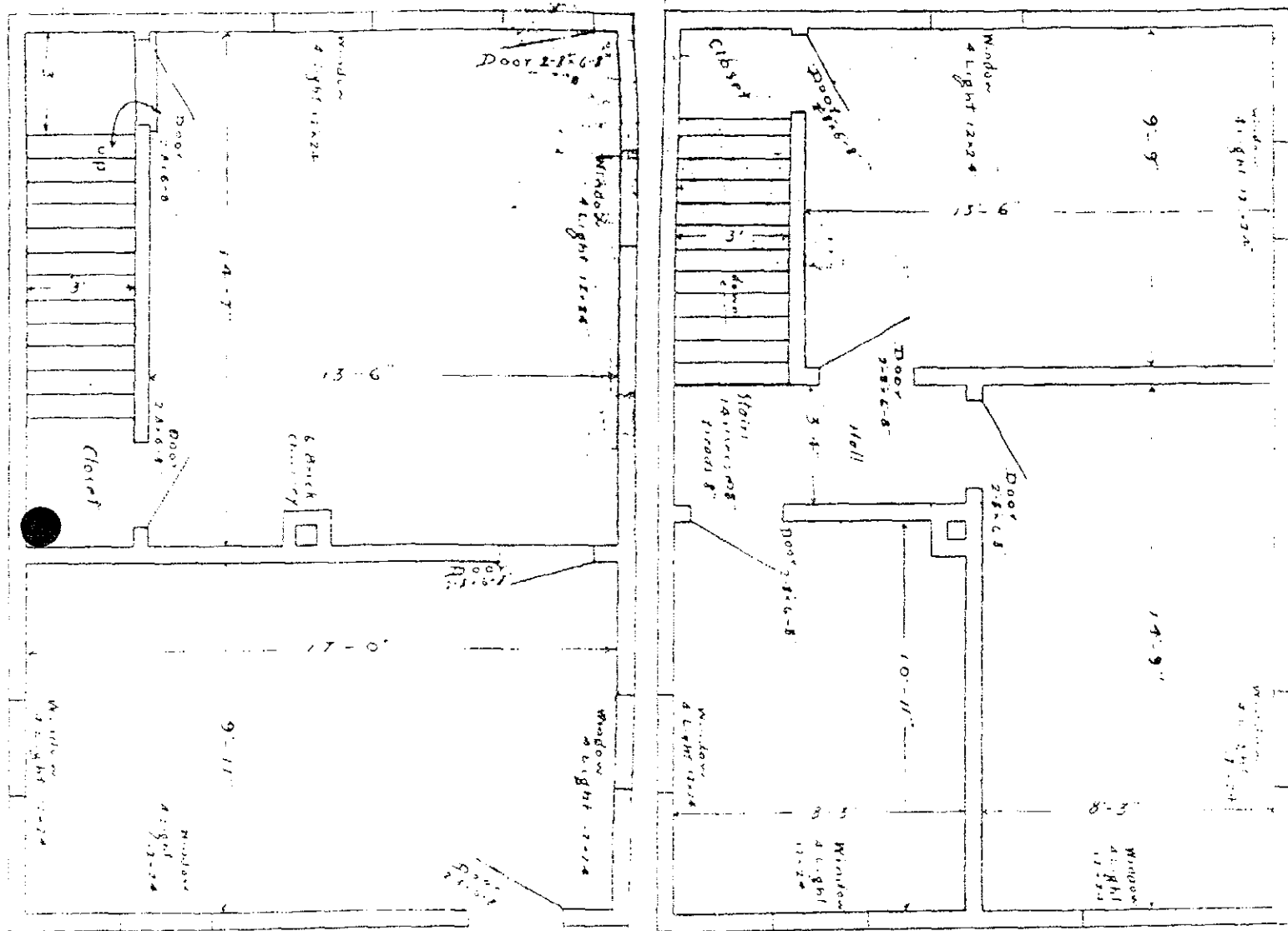


Figure 2. First and second floor plans for a detached, gable-front miner's house. Berwind-White Coal Mining Company, 1900.

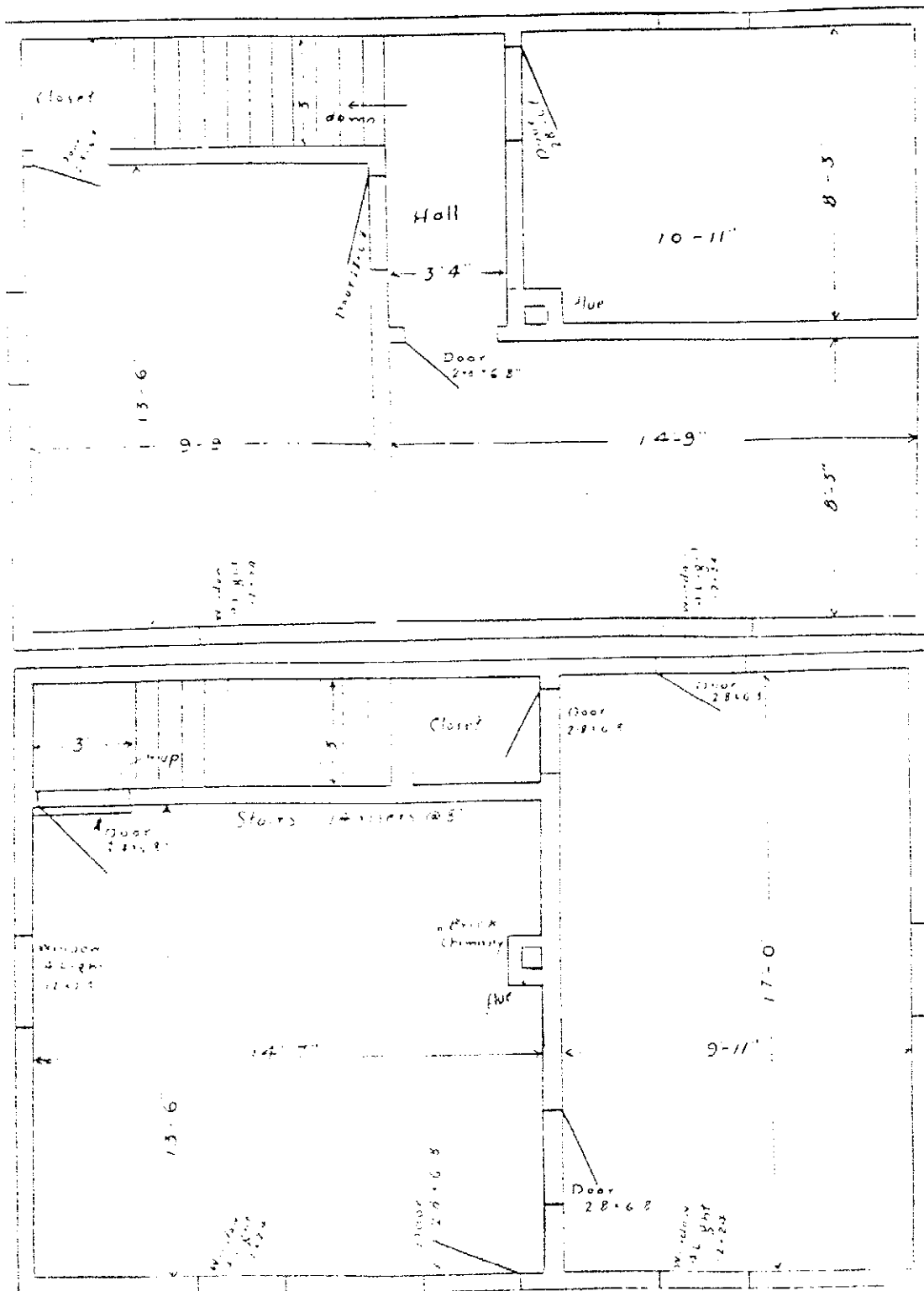


Figure 3. First and second floor plans for a detached, gable-end miner's house. Berwind-White Coal Mining Company, 1900.

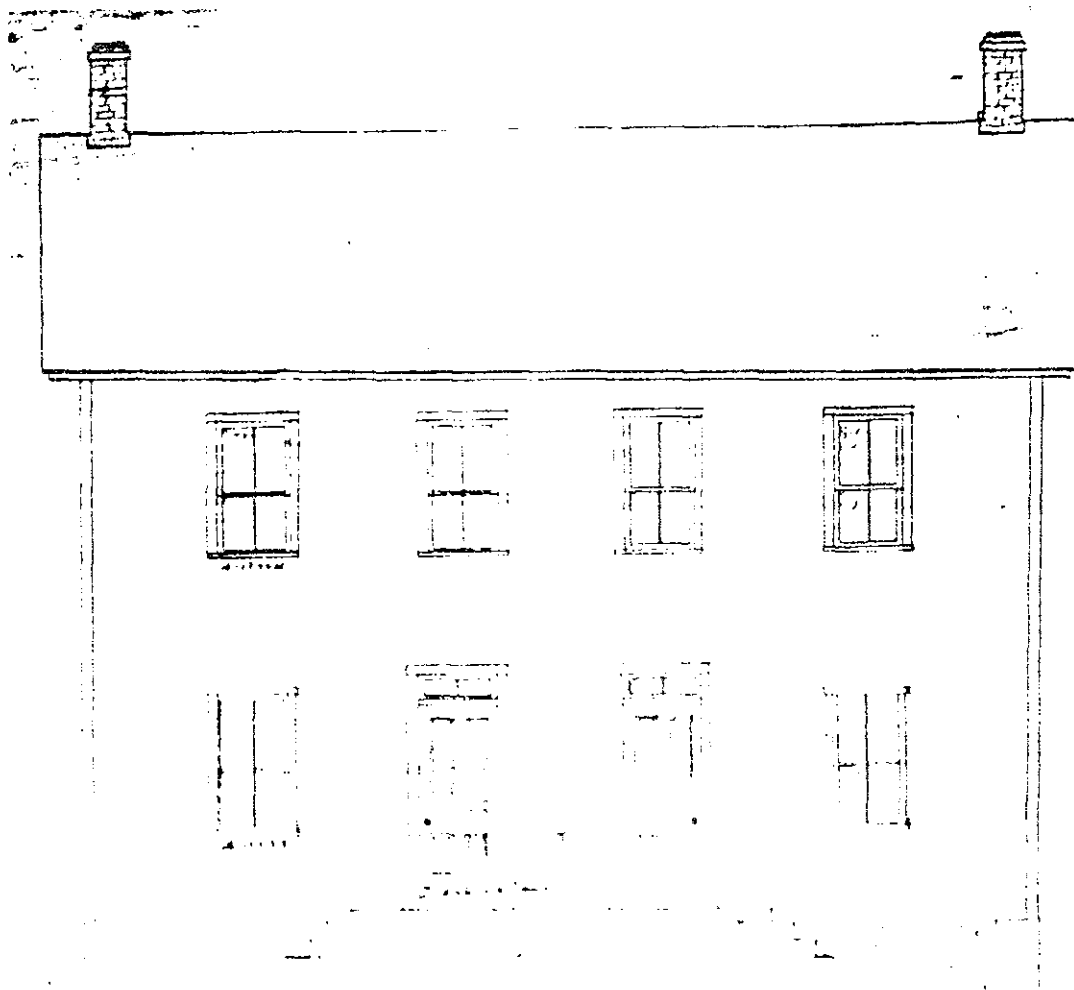


Figure 4. Front elevation of a semi-detached miner's house.
Berwind-White Coal Mining Company, 1897.

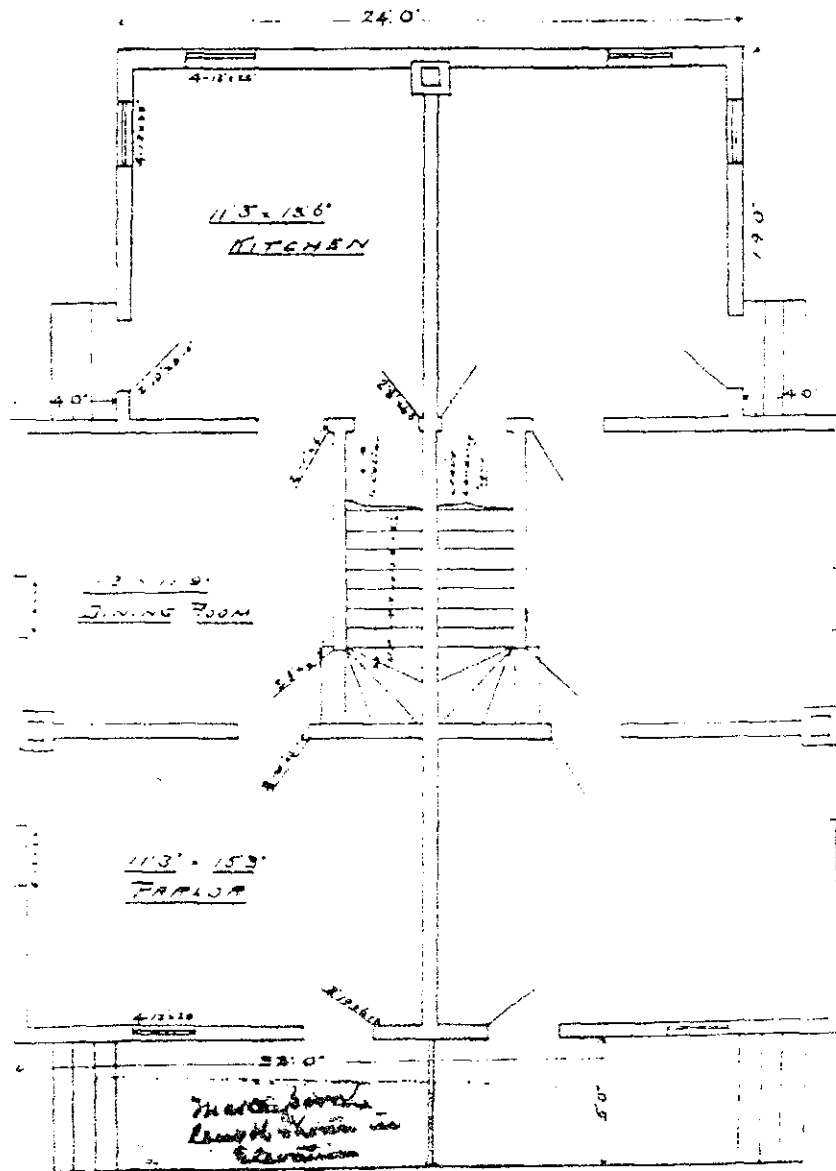
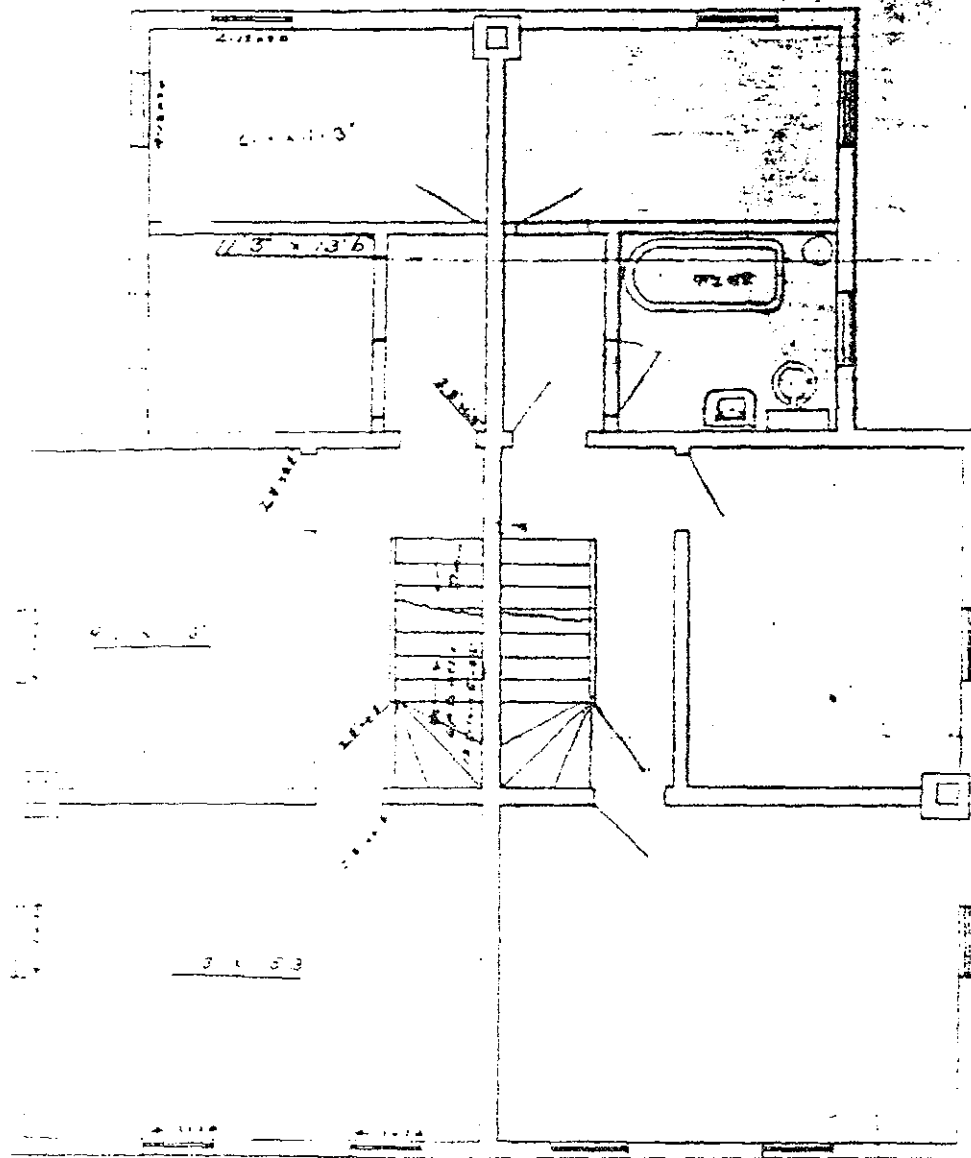


Figure 5. First floor plan, semi-detached miner's house. Berwind-White Coal Mining Company, 1897.



2ND FLOOR PLAN.

Scale 1/4\"

TWO STORY HOUSE 7, KITCHEN

Figure 6. Second floor plan, semi-detached miner's house. Berwind-White Coal Mining Company, 1897.

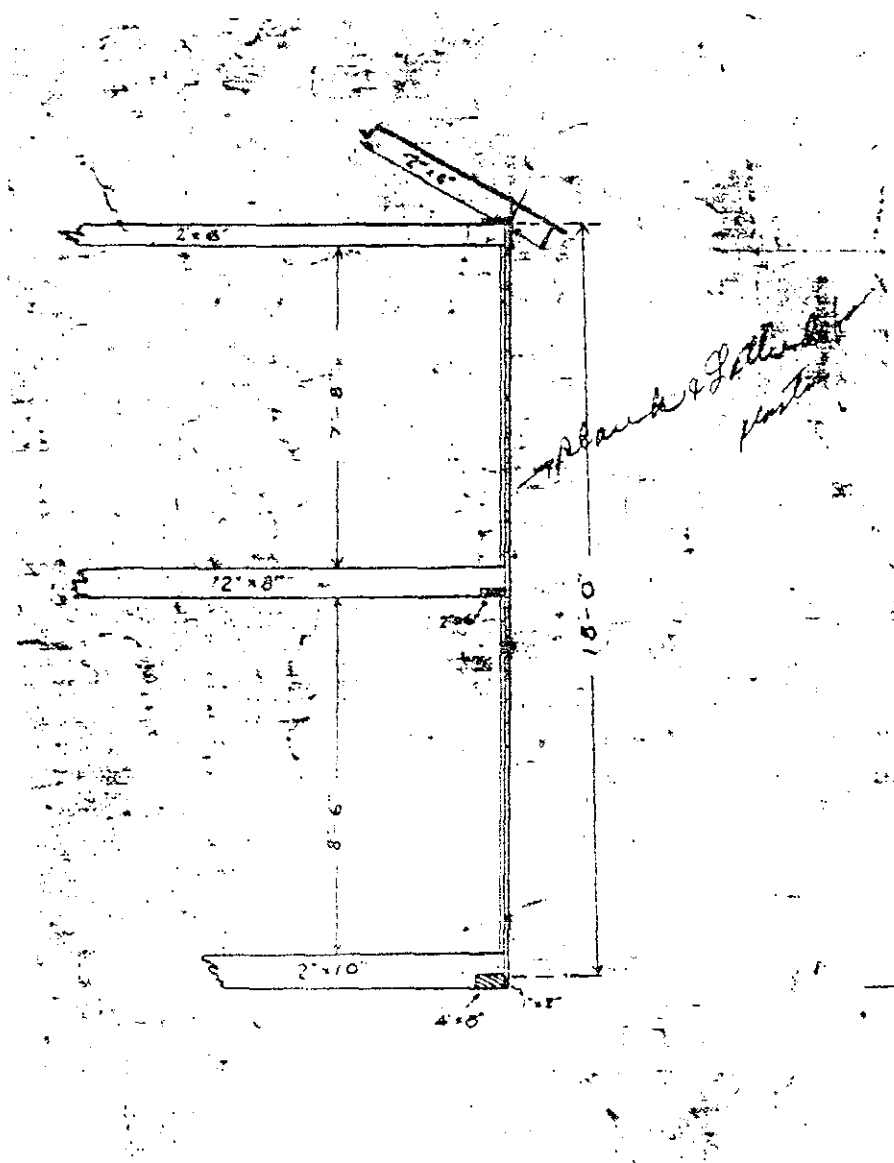


Figure 7. Section of a vertical plank house. Berwind-White Coal Mining Company, 1900.



Figure 8. Front elevation, vertical plank house. Berwind-White Coal Mining Company, 1900.

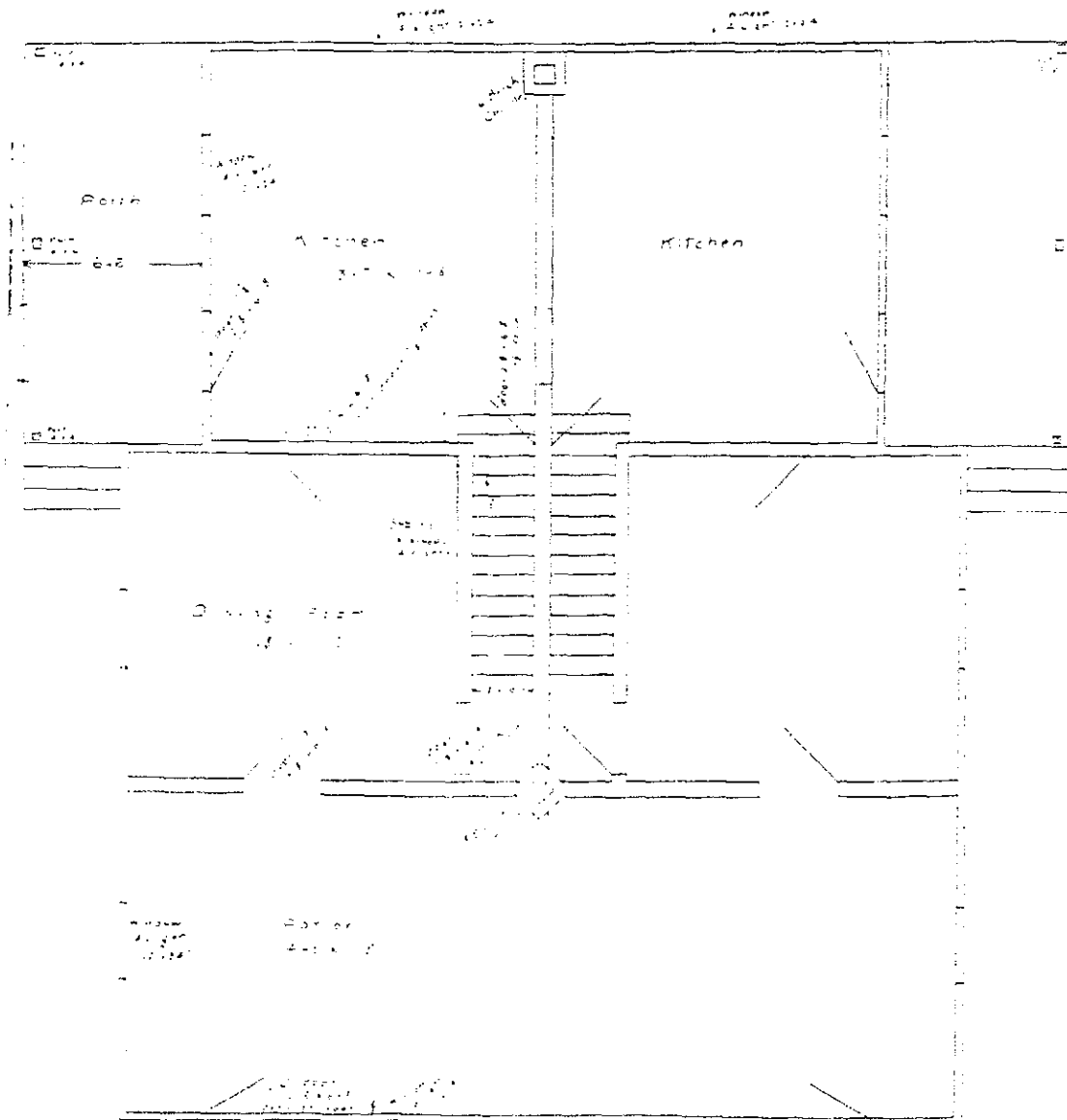


Figure 9. First floor plan of a vertical plank house. Berwind-White Coal Mining Company, 1900.

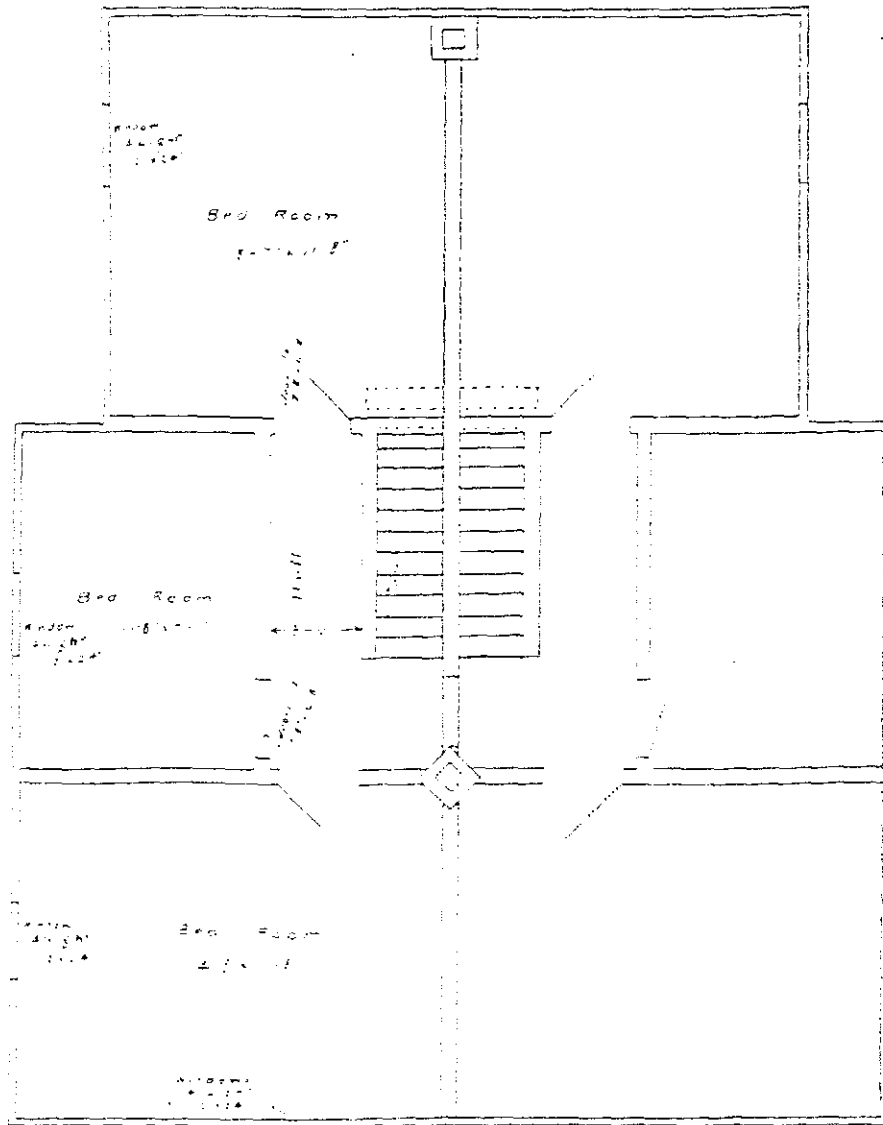


Figure 10. Second floor plan of a vertical plank house. Berwind-White Coal Mining Company, 1900.

ENDNOTES

¹Untitled manuscript history of the Berwind family and the Berwind-White Coal Mining Company, [ca. 1980], photocopy, collection of Robert Barrett, former vice-president, Berwind-Wilmore Division, Berwind Corporation, Davidsville, Pennsylvania.

²Fred C. Doyle, ed., Fiftieth Anniversary, Windber, Pennsylvania, 1897-1947 (Windber, 1947), 27.

³Frank Paul Alcamo, The Windber Story: A Twentieth Century Model Pennsylvania Coal Town (Windber: privately printed, 1983), 69.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Untitled manuscript.

⁶Bureau for Historic Preservation, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Somerset County Historic Resource Survey, no. 111-WB-672. Prepared by Glessner, Lehman and Kendall, 1986.

⁷Doyle.

⁸Alcamo, 76.

⁹Alcamo, 72; manuscript.

¹⁰Doyle, 25.

¹¹U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employers' Housing in the United States," by Leifur Magnusson, Monthly Labor Review, (November 1917), 45.

¹²Doyle, 25.

¹³Windber Era, Illustrated Edition. (Windber: Windber, Era, 1900).

¹⁴Doyle, 30.

¹⁵Eureka No. 30 is included with the satellites because, although it lies within Paint's boundaries, it is not part of Windber in the sense that the communities of Nos. 31 and 32 are.

¹⁶Basil Trovato, interview by author, 15 July 1988, Eureka 42.

¹⁷Alcamo, 101.

¹⁸Doyle, 30.

¹⁹Alcamo, 87.

²⁰Sanborn Map Company, Windber, Pennsylvania, 1899 (New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1899).

²¹Ibid.

²²U. S. Immigration Commission, Immigrants in Industries (In 25 Parts), Part I: Bituminous Coal Mining, Vol. I (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1911), 493.

²³Apparently the No. 35 houses were not electrified at this date. According to Sewell Oldham, a retired Berwind surveyor, only one group of houses was electrified each year, and only during the winter months. Sewell Oldham, interview by author, 14 April 1988, Windber; Immigration Commission, 493.

²⁴Photographs, Windber Museum collection.

²⁵Berwind-White Coal Mining Company, drawing E-1/114.

²⁶Somerset County Historic Resource Survey, no. 111-WB-884.

²⁷Immigration Commission, 493; Sanborn maps, 1924.

²⁸Alcamo, 75; Drawing E-1/114; Immigration Commission, 494.

²⁹In the Immigration Commission's 1911 report, mine No. 42 is mine M. No housing was indicated at mine M at that time, implying that when the information in the report was compiled, community M either did not exist or was under construction.

³⁰Trovato.

³¹Ibid.

³²Immigration Commission, 476, 492-493; Oldham.

³³Oldham.

³⁴Somerset County Historic Resource Inventory, no. 111-WB-884.

³⁵Immigration Commission, 496, 498.

³⁶Alcamo, 127.

³⁷Sanborn maps, 1899.

³⁸Somerset County Historic Resource Inventory, no. 111-WB-673.

³⁹Sanborn maps, 1899.

⁴⁰The county survey card for St. John's (111-WB-068) lists the date as 1913, based on the datestone; Alcamo, 222-223.

⁴¹Alcamo, 223; Somerset County Historic Resource Inventory, no. 111-WB-101.

⁴²Alcamo, 229.

⁴³Ibid., 252.

⁴⁴Immigration Commission, 496, 499; See also Ronald D. Eller, Miners, Millhands and Mountaineers (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1982), 220.

⁴⁵Somerset County Historic Resource Inventory, nos. 111-WB-1328 and 1329.

⁴⁶Alcamo, 205.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸The Windber Museum possesses a collection of original and photocopied advertisements placed by Berwind-White in immigrant newspapers. For additional information see the Immigration Commission, 473.

⁴⁹Immigration Commission, 481-499.

⁵⁰Alcamo, 971.

⁵¹Ibid., 161.

⁵²Ibid., 157-158; Doyle, 33.

⁵³Alcamo, 159.

⁵⁴Alcamo, 238.

⁵⁵Doyle, 50, 243-245.

⁵⁶Sanborn maps, 1910 and 1916.

⁵⁷Eller, 204; Bruce T. Williams and Michael D. Yates, Upward Struggle: A Bicentennial Tribute to Labor in Cambria and Somerset Counties (University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, 1976); Herbert Gutman, Work, Culture and Society (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), 214.

⁵⁸Alcamo, 175.

⁵⁹Statement of Facts and Summary of Committee Appointed by the Honorable John F. Harlan, Mayor of the City of New York, to Investigate the Labor Conditions at the Berwind-White Company's Coal Mines in Somerset and Other Counties, Pennsylvania, by David Hirschfield, Chairman (New York: M.B. Brown Printing and Binding, 1922), 18. Drastic wage cuts had severe repercussions because, unlike other professions, miners were only paid for what they produced. They did not receive wages for the time it took to travel from the drift mouth to the work face, often as much as an hour, nor were they paid for the time and work needed to prepare the site. This entailed clearing away all dead work, undercutting the coal seam, drilling holes in the face of the coal for blasting powder, setting and firing the charge, and loading the coal into cars marked with their personal number. The coal cars then had to travel from the work face to the tippie where it was weighed and the number of tons credited to the proper miner. The subject of the checkweighman was often a sore spot with miners. Before unionization, checkweighmen were "company men." As such, they were notorious for cheating miners by registering false weights. Miners' demands thus included the right to have their own man on the tippie. Miners were granted this right as part of their union contracts with coal operators in the 1930s. The contract called for a small deduction to be taken from each miners' pay for the checkweighmen's salaries. In this manner, the checkweighman's allegiance was transferred from the company to the miners.

⁶⁰Williams and Yates.

⁶¹Heber Blankenhorn, The Strike for Union (New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 1924; reprinted, New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1969), 18.

⁶²Ibid.; Alcamo, 177.

⁶³Alcamo, 177; Williams and Yates; Blankenhorn, 51-53.

⁶⁴Williams and Yates.

⁶⁵Alcamo, 177; Williams and Yates; Refer to n. 26, Chapter III.

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Photographs

Collection of Windber Museum, Windber, PA.:

- 1.) Hotel at Eureka mine No. 40.
- 2.) Groceries Department, Interior of main Eureka Department Store, Windber.
- 3.) Groceries Department, Interior of main Eureka Department Store, Windber.
- 4.) Linen Department, Interior of main Eureka Department Store, Windber.
- 5.) Graham Avenue showing commercial structures.
- 6.) Miners' semi-detached house at Eureka No. 35.
- 7.) Company store at Eureka No. 37.
- 8.) Rear view of Eureka No. 35 houses.
- 9.) Miners' semi-detached house at Eureka No. 35.
- 10.) Miners' semi-detached house at Eureka No. 42.
- 11.) Berwind-White Coal Mining Company main office.
- 12.) Union meeting at Bantley Place, Scalp Level, 1922.

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ADDITIONAL PROJECT INFORMATION

The Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), Robert J. Kapsch, chief, undertook this project in January 1988 at the request of America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP), Randy Cooley, director. AIHP encompasses a nine-county region--Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Fayette, Fulton, Huntingdon, Indiana, Somerset and Westmoreland counties in southwestern Pennsylvania. Developed by the National Park Service in 1986, AIHP focuses on the development, enhancement and interpretation of coal, iron and steelmaking, transportation, and related industrial themes and how these themes can be incorporated into regional tourism promotion and economic revitalization efforts while involving regional scenic, recreational, cultural, and natural resources.

This report was part of a larger project to document coal company towns in southwestern Pennsylvania. Alison K. Hoagland, HABS historian, directed the project. HAER photographer, Jet Lowe provided the large-format photographs. Margaret M. Mulrooney, HABS historian, researched and wrote the reports which, in addition to a history of Windber, also included histories of Colver in Cambria County (HAER No. PA-329), Star Junction in Fayette County (HAER No. PA-320). Mulrooney's work was published as A Legacy of Coal: The Coal Company Towns of Southwestern Pennsylvania (Washington, D.C.: Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Building Record, National Park Service, 1989). A great number of people aided in the completion of the project, but the author would particularly like to thank the residents of Colver, Windber and Star Junction, Pennsylvania, for their kindness, cooperation and tremendous generosity.